

EM SSAB CHAIRS
Bi-Monthly Conference Call
February 23, 2012

Participants

<i>Board</i>	<i>Chairs/Representatives</i>	<i>Site Support Staff</i>
Hanford	Susan Leckband	Paula Call, Tiffany Nguyen, Sharon Braswell
Idaho	Willie Preacher	Peggy Hinman
Nevada	Kathleen Bienenstein	Kelly Snyder, Denise Rupp
Northern New Mexico	Ralph Phelps	Ed Worth, Menice Santistevan
Oak Ridge	Ed Juarez	Melyssa Noe, Pete Osborne, Spencer Gross
Paducah		Buz Smith, Eric Roberts, Jim Ethridge
Portsmouth	Dick Snyder	Julie Galloway
Savannah River	Don Bridges	Erica Williams

DOE-HQ Representatives

EM-3.2	Catherine Alexander, Melissa Nielson, Michelle Hudson, Dave Borak, Elizabeth Schmitt
EM-10	Mark Gilbertson
EM-60	Terry Tyborowski

Opening Remarks

Ms. Catherine Alexander, Designated Federal Officer for the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), called the meeting to order.

Budget Update

Ms. Terry Tyborowski, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Program Planning and Budget (EM-60), provided a status update on the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget. Documents containing information on the 2013 budget request may be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov/Pages/budgetdocs.aspx>.

Ms. Tyborowski reported that the FY 2013 presidential budget request for EM is \$5.65 billion, which is more than 1% below the FY 2012 active level. She then highlighted a number of priority projects that are covered by the FY 2013 request, including:

- Hanford - a major goal at the site is to complete waste removal and additional remedial actions at 13 high-risk facilities. Construction of the Waste Treatment Plant and work on tank farm infrastructure upgrades will also continue.
- Idaho – there are plans to complete treatment of 900,000 gallons of liquid tank waste by 2013.
- Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) – goal of completing disposal of 1,800 cubic meters of aboveground transuranic (TRU) waste.

- Moab – plan to dispose of 650,000 tons of radioactive mill tailings.
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) – continuing to make progress in decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) activities at the K-25 building, which are targeted for completion in 2015.
- Paducah – continuing to make progress on D&D activities.
- Savannah River Site (SRS) – working to complete disposition of the site’s contact-handled legacy TRU waste and close two high-level waste tanks.

Regarding the compliance status, Ms. Tyborowski stated that there are 123 major enforceable milestones that are due in 2013, and the budget request positions EM to meet those milestones.

The FY 2013 budget request has been sent to Congress. Mr. Dave Huizenga, Senior Advisor for EM, and several Deputy Assistant Secretaries, including Ms. Tyborowski, have briefed the Senate Appropriations Committee, House Appropriations Committee, Senate Appropriations Committee, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Ms. Tyborowski noted that these briefings went well, as Mr. Huizenga has been particularly well received in these committees that understand the importance of the EM mission. Mr. Huizenga is scheduled to testify before the House Appropriations Committee in late March.

Ms. Tyborowski described what she believes the immediate future holds for the EM budget request. Congress’ approved budget for programs within DOE will likely match the proposed budget. Although Ms. Tyborowski stated that she believes the approved budget will not be lower than the proposed budget, she also said she does not believe that there will be any increases, because of the strong focus on lowering federal spending. Because it is an election year, Congress is not anxious to pass the budget, so EM may be placed under a Continuing Resolution at the beginning of FY 2013. When the next Congressional session begins in January 2013, appropriations will likely be addressed.

Discussion

Mr. Dick Snyder from the Portsmouth SSAB commented on a pie chart in the presentation on the proposed EM budget, which can be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov/pdfs/FY13%20Budget%20RolloutFeb%208%20w%20changes%202-14-12.pdf> (page 12). Mr. Snyder asked if there is a similar pie chart that breaks down the allocation by site.

Ms. Tyborowski stated that that information is included in the budget presentation that was provided to the sites.

Mr. Mark Gilbertson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Site Restoration (EM-10), explained that site breakdowns can be found in the EM budget. The breakdown of specific Project-Baseline Summaries (PBSs) provides a description of work budgeted for 2011-2014. He added that if sites need additional information, he is available to help.

Site Restoration Update

Mr. Gilbertson gave an update of the Office of Site Restoration and his perspectives as the new Deputy Assistant Secretary for EM-10 on budget impacts to site restoration activities.

EM received \$950 million for D&D activities in FY13 and over \$600 million for soil and groundwater remediation. These programs, now located within the EM-10 organization, previously received a large amount of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds because the work was “shovel-ready.” However, going forward, EM-10 will need to find ways to optimize its work with a more constrained budget.

Mr. Gilbertson explained that the challenge is to understand the lessons learned from ARRA and determine how DOE can do better in the future with less funding. EM-10 will work closely with sites across country to create the most effective program possible. Asset revitalization work by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), led by Tom D’Agostino, Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, is also important because cleanup activities may create progress in a number of areas.

Discussion

Mr. Don Bridges of the Savannah River Site Citizen’s Advisory Board (CAB) asked how H-canyon and disposition of spent fuel fared in the proposed budget.

Ms. Tyborowski stated that adequate funding for these activities is in the budget and that she expects no pushback in this area.

Mr. Ralph Phelps of the Northern New Mexico CAB commented that the initiative to remove aboveground TRU waste at the Los Alamos site is important to Board members and that the CAB is concerned that the budget for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), where the TRU waste is expected to go, has been cut substantially. He wanted to know if this budget cut will affect WIPP’s ability to accept the site’s TRU waste.

Mr. Gilbertson stated that advancements in waste characterization are partly responsible for the WIPP budget being a bit lower than historic levels. He added, however, that his office is working to ensure there is enough funding for WIPP to continue all planned disposition activities.

Ms. Susan Leckband of the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) expressed her concern with leaving TRU at Hanford. She was interested in the potential of extending the life of WIPP to accommodate high-level waste, such as that expected to come out of Hanford.

Mr. Gilbertson stated that action on the Blue Ribbon Commission report, which was released early this year, will include future analysis of high-level waste disposition and how WIPP will be utilized.

Mr. Bridges asked if there is any new information regarding a possible expanded role for WIPP.

Mr. Gilbertson explained that he does not have additional insight into this issue.

Ms. Tyborowski added that budget-planning guidance will be sent to field from DOE HQ in about two weeks. Additional, more specific guidance about the budget will be released in three to four weeks. She would like the sites to start engaging stakeholders now on priorities for the FY 2014 budget.

Spring Chairs' Meeting

Mr. Eric Roberts and Mr. Buz Smith of the Paducah CAB gave an update on the planning process for the upcoming Spring Chairs' Meeting in April.

Mr. Roberts explained that a revised draft agenda was being circulated to sites. He added that if anyone had additional questions or concerns about travel arrangements, they should contact the Paducah office.

Ms. Alexander reviewed the draft agenda, explaining that the format was similar to past meeting agendas, but that a few changes had been recommended by the planning committee. One was that instead of one Chairs' Round Robin, as in the past, two Round Robins be scheduled. During the first, each Chair will be given a maximum of five minutes to present the local boards' top one-to-two issues and achievements; closely controlling time allocation will ensure sufficient time for Mr. Huizenga to ask questions and to engage with the Chairs in informal dialogue. Local boards can submit additional topics in advance of the meeting for inclusion in Mr. Huizenga's briefing materials. A random drawing will determine the Round Robin presentation order.

A second Chairs' Round Robin is scheduled later in the day, during which Chairs will share topics they believe may be of interest to one or more other sites. Cross-cutting issues may be discussed for potential recommendations to the agency.

Mr. Pete Osborne, who supports the Oak Ridge SSAB, suggested that the sites send the identified cross-cutting issues from each local board to DOE-HQ, so that they can be distributed and considered by local board members before the meeting. The deadline for submitting these issues to DOE-HQ is March 30.

HQ updates to be given on Day One will be by Ms. Tyborowski on the budget and by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Waste Management Frank Marcinowski on cleanup progress and plans for coming years. It was noted that gray boxes are included on the draft agenda to identify issues that the planning committee would like speakers to address; more items still can be added.

Ms. Leckband explained the background for the presentation "EM SSAB Best Practices – Leveraging Public Involvement," which will take place on Day Two of the meeting. The HAB's Public Involvement Subcommittee is very active, and interest group representatives who sit on board also do their own public involvement activities to encourage people to attend HAB meetings. Ms. Leckband and other HAB members want to share how to leverage the connections they have with DOE and with the public.

Mr. Ed Juarez from the Oak Ridge SSAB asked if the HAB has any particular mechanism they use that makes public involvement easier. He added that Oak Ridge has had good experiences with public involvement and has recently started Facebook and YouTube accounts to further encourage this interaction.

Ms. Leckband said that while she commends Oak Ridge on its successful interaction with the public, some sites have not been able to facilitate as strong a relationship. She suggested that all sites share what they are doing to encourage public involvement so the sites can learn best practices from each other.

Around the Complex

Savannah River Site CAB – Don Bridges

- The Board has four issue-based subcommittees that meet every other month in a formal setting. Each committee will have a meeting one Tuesday night per month in months when there isn't a full board meeting.

Portsmouth SSAB – Dick Snyder

- The D&D program is coming along well. The Board is involved in the decisions dealing with the proposed waste disposal, which may be either on- or off-site. Further study is needed and Board recommendations will be created in the future.
- The Board recently toured the test pit that contractors developed to understand the geology of a potential location for an on-site disposal cell. This area has not been determined to have archeological significance, although studies are continuing.

Paducah CAB – Eric Roberts

- The Board is excited to be adding four new members.
- The Board is now weighing in on important items such as long-term waste disposition, burial grounds, recycling, and the possibility of the gaseous diffusion plant closing in the future.

Oak Ridge SSAB – Ed Juarez

- The Board is focusing efforts on risk areas, such as radiological risk at ORNL and the environmental risk of mercury at Y-12, as well as life-cycle costs that are dependent on completing projects at the East Tennessee Technology Park.
- Half of the costs are going toward surveillance and infrastructure at the site. The EM Budget and Prioritization Committee is working with DOE OR to set priorities in these areas.

Northern New Mexico CAB – Ralph Phelps

- Two meetings were held in January. One was a special public meeting hosted by the CAB at the request of site management, which wanted to discuss renegotiating compliance milestones with the State of New Mexico.
- High-level representatives from DOE HQ, New Mexico Environmental Department, NNSA, and LANL attended the meeting. The audience included representatives from the Los Alamos City Council, as well as state and federal representatives and other members of the public.
EM publicly acknowledged that some milestones must be renegotiated in order to direct efforts toward removing aboveground TRU waste from Tech Area 54, an initiative which the CAB has supported through recommendations.

Nevada SSAB – Kathy Bienenstein

- The Board is working on the FY15 budget priorities for recommendation to the agency.
- A Board recommendation on the disposal of U-233 at the Nevada site has been researched and a letter on the subject has been drafted.
- A membership drive for new members starts in March.

Idaho National Laboratory EM CAB – Willie Preacher

- The next meeting will be May 10, 2012.

Hanford Advisory Board – Susan Leckband

- The HAB held a two-day meeting early in the month as well as a number of subcommittee meetings.
- A major concern of the Board is the Waste Treatment Plant's safety culture.
- The DOE Chief Health, Safety and Security (HSS) Officer, Glenn Podonsky, was in attendance for the entire February meeting, as well as leads of local DOE field offices and their staff. Mr. Podonsky attended the HAB Health, Safety and Environmental Protection Subcommittee meeting because HSS has just completed a review on the safety culture at Hanford.
- The work plan for the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study is being completed; this study will lead to final Records of Decision. The end of 2012 and 2013 will be very important for Board regarding these matters.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Alexander thanked the participants for their time and adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm EST.